

The importance of eliminating shutdown threats to the District was definitively shown recently. The three leading bond rating agencies favorably cited the fiscal year 2014 D.C. Appropriations bill provision exempting D.C. from a shutdown in fiscal year 2015. In upgrading their ratings on the District's outstanding general obligation bonds, Standard & Poor's Rating Services and Fitch Ratings both favorably cited the provision, and Moody's Investors Service favorably cited the provision while maintaining D.C.'s rating.

Several years ago, we negotiated an agreement with a Republican-led appropriations committee that ensures that the city's local budget is approved in the first continuing resolution (CR) if the D.C. Appropriations bill has not been approved by the start of the fiscal year, another important step that responded to practical realities. This approach ended the annual nightmares of lengthy delays of approval of the local budget of a big city until a national appropriations bill was passed, often months after the start of the fiscal year. As a result, under CRs, the city has been able to spend its local funds at the next year's funding level, even though federal agencies must spend at the prior year's funding level. We are deeply appreciative that this process, which eliminated serious problems for the functioning of the D.C. government, has continued.

We nearly secured budget autonomy for the District in the last days of the lame-duck session in the 111th Congress, when Democrats were in control. We got the House authorizers to include budget autonomy in the fiscal year 2011 D.C. Appropriations bill, which was passed by the subcommittee. Unfortunately, the Democratic Senate did not include budget autonomy in its appropriations bill, and Congress passed a CR instead of regular appropriations bills in the lame duck.

Most important, we gained critical support for D.C. budget autonomy in the 112th and 113th Congresses. In an Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing in May 2011, Chairman DARRELL ISSA (R-CA) endorsed budget autonomy. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) and Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell (R) during that year both indicated their support for budget autonomy. Last Congress, Majority Leader Cantor and Chairman ISSA both continued in their support for budget autonomy. The President's fiscal year 2015 budget, for the second time, will have granted D.C. budget autonomy. The Senate's fiscal year 2015 D.C. Appropriations bill granted the District budget autonomy, which was the first ever appropriations bill to grant it. We also got budget autonomy introduced as a stand-alone bill in the Senate.

We kept the budget autonomy referendum from being overturned in Congress. However, a federal district court struck it down and an appeal is pending before a federal appeals court.

Even if the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act of 2015 were enacted, Congress would still retain jurisdiction over the District of Columbia under article I, section 8, clause 17 of the U.S. Constitution until statehood is achieved. This authority allows Congress to make changes to the District's budget at any time, as we saw last week when the House voted to permanently ban the District from spending its local funds on abortion services for low-income women. Therefore, it is unnecessary to require the District to incur the costs

and delays of transmitting its local budget for congressional approval. The time is overdue to permit the city to enact its local budget, the single most immediate step Congress could take to help the District better manage itself.

Members of Congress were sent to Washington to do the business of the nation, not a local jurisdiction. Members have no reason to be interested in or to become knowledgeable about the local budget of a single city or jurisdiction far from their own. In the past, the House and Senate have more often than not passed the District's budget as is. Our budget autonomy bill takes the Congress in the direction it is already moving.

#### INTRODUCTION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES PAID PARENTAL LEAVE ACT

**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 27, 2015*

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, in his State of Union President Obama spoke about restoring the link between hard work and growing opportunity for every American. That link is at the very core of what made America great. And he spoke about the need to ensure that working families have a fair shot and a level playing field.

One of the places that the United States continues to lag behind the entire rest of the world is in providing paid parental leave. The U.S. is the only industrialized nation with no paid parental leave. It is only us and Papua New Guinea in the whole world that have no statutory maternity leave. This is embarrassing and it hurts hardworking American families.

It is way past time to drag at least our federal workplace policies into the 21st century. That is why I am introducing the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act to provide six weeks of paid parental leave to federal employees for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child.

The federal government is our nation's largest employer and it should be setting an example—and leading the march into the modern era. Paid parental leave would be a big boost for the almost two million people who work for the federal government. And this won't just affect our nation's capital—86 percent of federal workers live and work outside the metro Washington, DC area. In fact, the metro region of my home city of New York City has the second highest number of federal employees of any region in the country.

For these working families in New York and elsewhere around the country, paid leave is an economic lifeline. The growing costs of caring for a new child—the expensive diapers, bottles, baby carriers—they all add up very quickly. The U.S. Department of Agriculture found that in the first two years a new child can cost families an average of nearly \$13,000. Who can forego weeks of pay on top of those new expenses. It is both crippling and cruel to ask families to choose between a paycheck and caring for a new child when costs continue to mount.

Providing paid leave helps pay for itself with the broad benefits it produces. It gives parents the time to bond with their child in those critical first weeks of life and research shows the

critical nature of the first few months of life on the health and intellectual development over the lifetime of the child.

To those who would push back on this legislation, I refer you to the Congressional Budget Office findings that this legislation is budget neutral. It costs nothing—but it means everything. It requires no new money but would immeasurably enrich the lives of federal employees by allowing them to maintain their salary during the course of FMLA-permitted parental leave.

I urge my Republican colleagues to support the bill. It passed the House twice before—with great bipartisan support. Now is the moment to bring this legislation forward and in so doing, bring America forward.

WINTER STORM JUNO

**HON. DAVID N. CICILLINE**

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 27, 2015*

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the state and local leaders and emergency responders in Rhode Island who, as I speak, are working tirelessly to manage the impact of Winter Storm Juno that struck Rhode Island last night.

This storm is still hitting Rhode Island with heavy snow, high winds and coastal flooding. As a former Mayor, I understand the devastating impact this type of snowfall can have on individuals and families, and the painstaking efforts it will take to restore services to Rhode Island's communities.

Yesterday our entire delegation sent a letter to President Obama, Senator JACK REED, Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, Congressman JIM LANGEVIN, and I, urging the President to make federal assistance available to Rhode Island to support emergency operations and recovery due to the blizzard conditions.

I stand ready to assist my home state in any way I can, and applaud the tremendous efforts of our Governor Gina Raimondo, Mayor Jorge Elorza and all the dedicated local leaders and emergency responders who are working around the clock to ensure Rhode Island makes a speedy recovery.

#### FISCAL YEAR 2015 HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS BILL

**HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 27, 2015*

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month I voted against the Homeland Security Appropriations Bill for the remainder of Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 (H.R. 240), due to House Republicans' irresponsible attempt to hijack this must-pass legislation.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is at the forefront of protecting our nation from terrorist threats. The women and men on the frontline of securing America's borders deserve a clean appropriations bill that provides them with the funding and resources they need to keep our families, communities, and our nation safe. Instead of bringing a bipartisan bill to the Floor, House Republicans opted to pick a political fight with the